

The President's Radio Address

April 22, 2000

Good morning, and happy Earth Day. I've always thought it appropriate that Earth Day falls in this season of renewal and hope, as millions of Americans celebrate Easter and Passover. As we celebrate the first Earth Day of the 21st century, I want to challenge all of us to renew our commitment to protect and preserve God's precious gift to us, our earthly home.

Last weekend in California I stood beneath a magnificent sequoia tree, more than 1,000 years old, to announce permanent protection for more than 30 giant sequoia groves. And I was grateful for every opportunity the Vice President and I have had to act as stewards of our environment over the last 7 years.

All Americans can be proud of the tremendous progress we've made since the first Earth Day 30 years ago. Our air, water, and land are cleaner, and we've protected millions of acres of America's green places. But today I want to focus on the most critical environmental challenge we face in this new century, global warming.

The 1990's were the hottest decade on record, and the first 3 months of 2000 were the hottest here in 100 years. Scientists say that the temperature rise is at least partly due to human activity, and that if left unchecked, climate change will result in more violent storms, more economic disruptions, and more permanent flooding of coastal areas.

If we value our coastlines, our farm lands, and our vital biodiversity, we must build a national consensus to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases and to help others around the world do the same. Our Government must lead by example.

Today I'm announcing two Federal initiatives that point the way to a cleaner environment and a stronger economy. First, I'm issuing an Executive order requiring that Federal agencies reduce the amount of petroleum their vehicle fleets use by 20 percent in 5 years. We can do this with technology we already have. For example, the Postal Service has purchased 500 electric trucks and may purchase more than 5,000. Here in

Washington, DC, 2,600 Federal and local government vehicles are running on clean natural gas or ethanol. Next month we'll open the first of seven gas stations offering those fuels here, and I'll order every White House vehicle that can use these fuels to make the switch. This Executive order will cut oil consumption by 45 million gallons a year, help stop global warming, and ease pressure on gas prices.

Second, I'm also announcing new incentives to cut pollution and greenhouse gases while we help Federal workers across the country reduce the growing hassle of commuting. All Federal workers now will be able to set aside up to \$65 tax-free every month to pay for public transportation. And in the Washington area, every Federal agency will actually fund some or all of its employees' public transportation costs.

It is clear citizens and businesses across America are building support for a strong response to global warming. But one voice is still missing, the United States Congress. While the science on climate change has grown stronger and the need for American leadership has grown greater, some in Congress have buried their heads even deeper in the sand. I urge them to recognize that reversing global warming will strengthen our economy while safeguarding our future.

In the next 20 years, the international energy market will reach \$5 trillion, and consumers everywhere increasingly will demand clean energy. We're the world leader in those technologies. We should be promoting them, not denying their need. Instead, for the past 7 years, Congress has blocked our initiatives to fight climate change and cut America's fuel bills.

I'm deeply disappointed the Republican budget resolution just adopted fails again to support America's environmental priorities. And again I call on Congress to reverse its opposition and work with us to pass my \$4-billion package of tax credits for energy-efficient homes, cars, and appliances, to invest in clean energy research, and to help us promote clean technology in developing countries. Congress should also end its opposition and help us improve the fuel economy of all our cars and trucks so Americans can

have the vehicles they want with the efficiency they deserve.

More than 100 years ago, the great American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow reminded us that “nature is a revelation of God.” This Earth Day, let us remember that we are only stewards, in our time, of the Earth God gave us for all time. And let us strengthen our resolve to preserve the beauty and the natural bounty that sustains us and must sustain generations yet to come.

Happy holidays, and thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 5:12 p.m. on April 21 in the East Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Executive Order 13148—Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management

April 21, 2000

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (42 U.S.C. 11001–11050) (EPCRA), the Pollution Prevention Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 13101–13109) (PPA), the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C. 7401–7671q) (CAA), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

PART 1—PREAMBLE

Section 101. Federal Environmental Leadership. The head of each Federal agency is responsible for ensuring that all necessary actions are taken to integrate environmental accountability into agency day-to-day decisionmaking and long-term planning processes, across all agency missions, activities, and functions. Consequently, environmental management considerations must be a fundamental and integral component of Federal Government policies, operations, planning, and management. The head of each Federal agency is responsible for meeting the goals and requirements of this order.

PART 2—GOALS

Sec. 201. Environmental Management. Through development and implementation of environmental management systems, each agency shall ensure that strategies are established to support environmental leadership programs, policies, and procedures and that agency senior level managers explicitly and actively endorse these strategies.

Sec. 202. Environmental Compliance. Each agency shall comply with environmental regulations by establishing and implementing environmental compliance audit programs and policies that emphasize pollution prevention as a means to both achieve and maintain environmental compliance.

Sec. 203. Right-to-Know and Pollution Prevention. Through timely planning and reporting under the EPCRA, Federal facilities shall be leaders and responsible members of their communities by informing the public and their workers of possible sources of pollution resulting from facility operations. Each agency shall strive to reduce or eliminate harm to human health and the environment from releases of pollutants to the environment. Each agency shall advance the national policy that, whenever feasible and cost-effective, pollution should be prevented or reduced at the source. Funding for regulatory compliance programs shall emphasize pollution prevention as a means to address environmental compliance.

Sec. 204. Release Reduction: Toxic Chemicals. Through innovative pollution prevention, effective facility management, and sound acquisition and procurement practices, each agency shall reduce its reported Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) releases and off-site transfers of toxic chemicals for treatment and disposal by 10 percent annually, or by 40 percent overall by December 31, 2006.

Sec. 205. Use Reduction: Toxic Chemicals and Hazardous Substances and Other Pollutants. Through identification of proven substitutes and established facility management practices, including pollution prevention, each agency shall reduce its use of selected toxic chemicals, hazardous substances, and pollutants, or its generation of hazardous and radioactive waste types at its facilities by 50 percent by December 31, 2006. If an agency